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REMARKS

Claims 17 and 21-23 are currently pending in the application. Claim 17 has been amended. Claims drawn to non-elected groups have been cancelled without prejudice to Applicants right to pursue the cancelled claims in this or a subsequent application.

In response to the Restriction Requirement, Applicants elect Group I, directed to claims 17 and 21-23, as that Group is defined in the Office letter. Upon allowance of the elected group, Applicants request rejoinder of the remaining groups. Applicants expressly reserve the right to pursue the non-elected claims in one or more divisional applications.

Claim 21 was objected to under 37 C.F.R. 1.75(c) as being allegedly in improper format for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim.

The office action indicates that SEQ ID NO: 3, SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO: 5, SEQ ID NO: 8, SEQ ID NO: 47, SEQ ID NO: 50, SEQ ID NO: 61, and SEQ ID NO: 64 fail to further limit SEQ ID NO: 73.

Applicant respectfully disagrees. Claim 17 provides a screening method for a compound capable of changing the binding activity of a ligand polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 73, or its amide or ester, or a salt thereof, or a partial peptide of said ligand polypeptide, or its amide or ester, or a salt thereof.

In contrast, claim 21 provides screening methods of claim 17 in which the ligand polypeptide has a sequence specified in any one of SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO: 47, SEQ ID NO:48, SEQ ID NO:49, SEQ ID NO:50, SEQ ID NO:51, SEQ ID NO:52, SEQ ID NO: 61, SEQ ID NO:62, SEQ ID NO:63, SEQ ID NO:64, SEQ ID NO:65, or SEQ ID NO:66.

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Thus, claim 21 as originally presented is fully compliant with the requirements of 37 C.F.R. 1.75(c) including the requirement that each dependent claim further narrow the subject matter of the base independent claim and each intervening claim.

Claims 17, 21, and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, allegedly because the specification, while being enabling for a method of screening for a compound that changes the binding activity of said ligand for said receptor comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 21, does not reasonably provide enablement for said method wherein said receptor comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 19 or SEQ ID NO: 20.

Claims 17, 21, and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, allegedly as failing to comply with the written description requirement.

Although Applicant believes that the specification provides adequate enablement and description of the screening methods of the invention in conjunction with receptor proteins having a polypeptide sequence of SEQ ID NO. 19 or SEQ ID NO. 20, claim 17 has been amended to provide methods of screening compounds capable of changing the binding activity of a ligand polypeptide with a receptor protein comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 21 or SEQ ID NO: 22. Thus, claim 17, as amended, is fully compliant with the written description and enablement requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph.

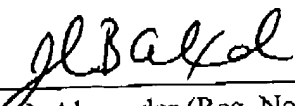
Early consideration and allowance of the application are earnestly solicited.

Applicants believe that no extension of time is required since this response is being filed before the expiration of the specified time period. Applicants, however, conditionally petition for an extension of time to provide for the possibility that such a petition has been inadvertently overlooked and is required. As provided below charge Deposit Account No. 04-1105 for any required fee.

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Respectfully submitted,


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